

Comments for the Local Government Committee regarding H.B. 5041

My name is Ray Vlasin and I am a member of a citizen group¹ in East Lansing concerned with the need for, and opportunities for, citizen participation to enhance local government decision making. Also, I serve as Co-chair of Government Relations for the Harrison Meadows Neighborhood Association in East Lansing that seeks to improve neighborhoods and citizen participation in East Lansing governmental decision making.

I strongly recommend against the passage of H.B. 5041. Both the content of the bill, and the process that has been followed in advancing it, seriously deny opportunities for the citizens of East Lansing to express their views about the important matter of non-conforming uses in their neighborhoods.

Regarding process: Neither the proposed bill, nor the matter it addresses, has come before the East Lansing Planning Commission as an action item that would have alerted citizens and permitted them to assess the bill and its consequences and to express their views. Neither has the proposed bill, or its policy purpose, come before the E. L. City Council as an action item that would have alerted citizens and permitted them to assess and comment on the proposal. Whether intentionally or not, the process followed by those advancing H.B. 5041 has denied East Lansing citizens major opportunities to review and comment on so vital a proposed action affecting their neighborhoods.

Regarding content: H.B. 5041 would strip selected regulatory powers and creative management opportunities away from East Lansing city government regarding non-conforming uses in neighborhoods. And simultaneously, H.B. 5041 would deny citizens the opportunities to engage with city government in discussion of possible creative approaches and outcomes to non-conforming uses that would best suit their particular neighborhood. Both of these consequences render the bill seriously inappropriate and totally unacceptable for East Lansing.

I and many E.L. citizens oppose H.B. 5041 because it takes away local government control and creative management opportunities from the city and it denies citizens the opportunity to engage in possible creative solutions that best fit their neighborhoods. We urge your disapproval of H.B. 5041.

If the Local Government Committee does not disapprove this proposed bill, it should postpone action on it so it can be brought up as action items by both the East Lansing Planning Commission and the East Lansing City Council. This would permit East Lansing citizen the opportunity for input that has been so seriously denied them thus far.

Respectfully submitted, Ray Vlasin, Co-chair Government Relations for Harrison Meadows Association, 1854 Cricket Lane, East Lansing, MI 48823

¹ Member of East Lansing Citizen Concerned, dedicated to informing citizens about governmental matters that affect their well-being, so that they can be more informed and more effective citizens in East Lansing betterment.